

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION

TOM J. JONES,)
Plaintiff,)
)
VS.) C.A. NO. H-08-3742
)
BONITA MORGAN, et al.)
Defendants.)

ORAL DEPOSITION OF

TOM J. JONES

February 25, 2010

ORAL DEPOSITION of TOM J. JONES, produced as a witness at the instance of the Defendants, and duly sworn, was taken in the above-styled and numbered cause on the 25th day of February, 2010, from 9:36 o'clock a.m. to 3:49 o'clock p.m., before Suzanne Marlow, CSR, RPR in and for the State of Texas, reported by machine shorthand, at the law offices of Dwight E. Jefferson, PLLC, 405 Main, Suite 950, Houston, Texas 77002, pursuant to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure and the provisions stated on the record or attached hereto.

1 that we're on or wait until we reach a natural stopping
2 point, but we'll try to do that as quickly as possible.
3 Okay?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. Tell me a little bit about your
6 employment history. Are you currently employed
7 anywhere?

8 A. No.

9 Q. And you were terminated from the Houston
10 Independent School District in May of 2008?

11 A. Correct.

12 Q. Or was it '07?

13 That's right, May of 2008. Have you
14 worked anywhere since you left the Houston Independent
15 School District?

16 A. No.

17 Q. When did you start working for the Houston
18 Independent School District?

19 A. I believe it was October 2009 -- 2000 -- '99.

20 Q. 1999?

21 A. 1999.

22 Q. Okay. And I'm not going to go all the way
23 back. Where were you employed just prior to going to
24 work for Houston Independent School District?

25 A. I was with Hope Charter School.

1 Q. Hope Charter School?

2 A. H-O-P-E.

3 Q. And where is Hope Charter School located?

4 A. Freeport, I believe the address was 1010
5 Freeport Street. It no longer exists.

6 Q. Did it stop operations in October 1999 or did
7 it continue on after you left there and went to HISD?

8 A. It stopped I believe in June of that year.

9 Q. Okay. So it stopped -- your employment there
10 stopped and then you went to work for HISD a couple of
11 months later?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. Okay. And where do you -- where did you first
14 work in HISD when you went to work there?

15 A. Debakey High School.

16 Q. And what position did you hold at Debakey High
17 School?

18 A. Vocal music teacher, chorale teacher.

19 Q. How long were you at Debakey High School?

20 A. For one year.

21 Q. And where did you go from Debakey High School?

22 A. Jack Yates High School.

23 Q. And did you go there in about 2003?

24 A. No. I went there in 2000.

25 Q. Okay. So you were at Debakey for one school

1 year?

2 A. Correct.

3 Q. And how long were you at Jack Yates High
4 School?

5 A. Three years.

6 Q. Who was the principal at Yates at that time?

7 A. Robert Worthy.

8 Q. What position or positions did you hold at
9 Yates High School?

10 A. Vocal music teacher and band instructor.

11 Q. Did you do both vocal music teaching and band
12 at the same time?

13 A. No. After -- vocal music first and then band.

14 Q. Okay. Where did you go from Jack Yates High
15 School?

16 A. Kelso Elementary School. Kelso, K-E-L-S-O.

17 Q. You went to Kelso in 2003?

18 A. I believe that's right.

19 Q. And how many years were you at Kelso?

20 A. I believe that was two and a half years until,
21 let's see, January 2005.

22 Q. And what position did you hold at Kelso
23 Elementary School?

24 A. Music teacher and choir teacher.

25 Q. And it's been a long time since I've been in

1 Q. So why, if you know, did Mr. August think that
2 you needed a new start in a new setting?

3 MR. JEFFERSON: Objection, form. You can
4 answer.

5 Q. (BY MR. GILBERT) You can answer the question.

6 A. The week before I sat in a meeting with the
7 principal and assistant principal along with the band
8 staff as we planned to return to school for band camp.

9 Q. Uh-huh.

10 A. He stated to me and to the staff that there
11 would be no changes in staffing in band, et cetera.
12 Everybody would assume their positions which was about
13 two weeks coming for school to start. I received a call
14 by his secretary to come in for a meeting. He told me
15 that he was transferring me to Kelso for my benefit to
16 get a new start. As to what he meant, I don't know.

17 Q. Did you ask him what he meant?

18 A. No.

19 Q. Okay. Now you were at Kelso for two and a half
20 years roughly. Why did you leave Kelso?

21 A. That was a transfer, it was as stated by the
22 principal due to lack of funding for the position.

23 Q. And do you know whether after you left did they
24 have a music teacher?

25 A. I do not know.

1 spoke English?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. What was your reception as you perceived
4 it when you got to Hines-Caldwell? How were you
5 received by the administration?

6 A. Cautiously.

7 Q. Okay. When you got there, were you the only
8 music teacher, or did they already have the music
9 teacher?

10 A. They already had a music teacher.

11 Q. Who was the music teacher that they had at this
12 point?

13 A. Venita Rhodes.

14 Q. Was it unusual in your experience as a teacher
15 to have two music teachers at an elementary school?

16 A. No.

17 Q. Did you and Ms. Rhodes divvy up the duties in
18 any way when you first got there?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Okay. How -- what duties did you have when you
21 first got there?

22 A. We co-taught the classes. She could take one
23 level or segment of students and I would take the other
24 segment, or she would take one grade level and I would
25 take the next grade level.